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(45) **Date of Patent:** Jun. 7, 2016

(54) **PHYSICAL LAYER MANAGEMENT (PLM) SYSTEM FOR USE WITH AN OPTICAL DISTRIBUTION FRAME IN WHICH TRAYS CAN BE SELECTIVELY REMOVED AND RE-ATTACHED**

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H05K 5/0286; H05K 5/0291; G02B 6/4452;
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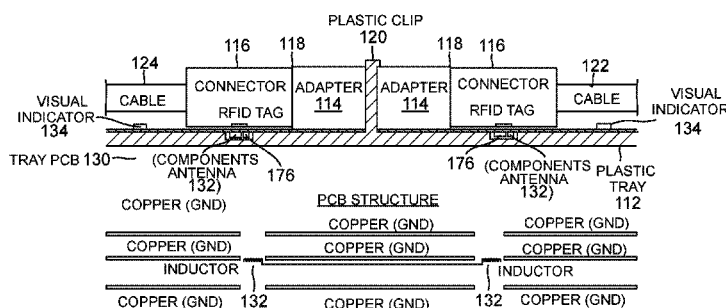
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

One embodiment is directed to a subrack comprising a backplate and at least one tray configured so that a plurality of connections can be made at a plurality of positions on the tray. Each of the plurality of connections involves at least one connector having information stored in a device associated therewith that can be read. The backplate and the tray are configured so that the tray can be selectively attached and removed from the backplate. The backplate and the tray are configured so that the devices associated with the connectors involved in making the connections can be read via the tray. The devices associated with the connections can be implemented, for example, using RFID tags or connection point identifier (CPID) storage devices (such as EEPROMs).

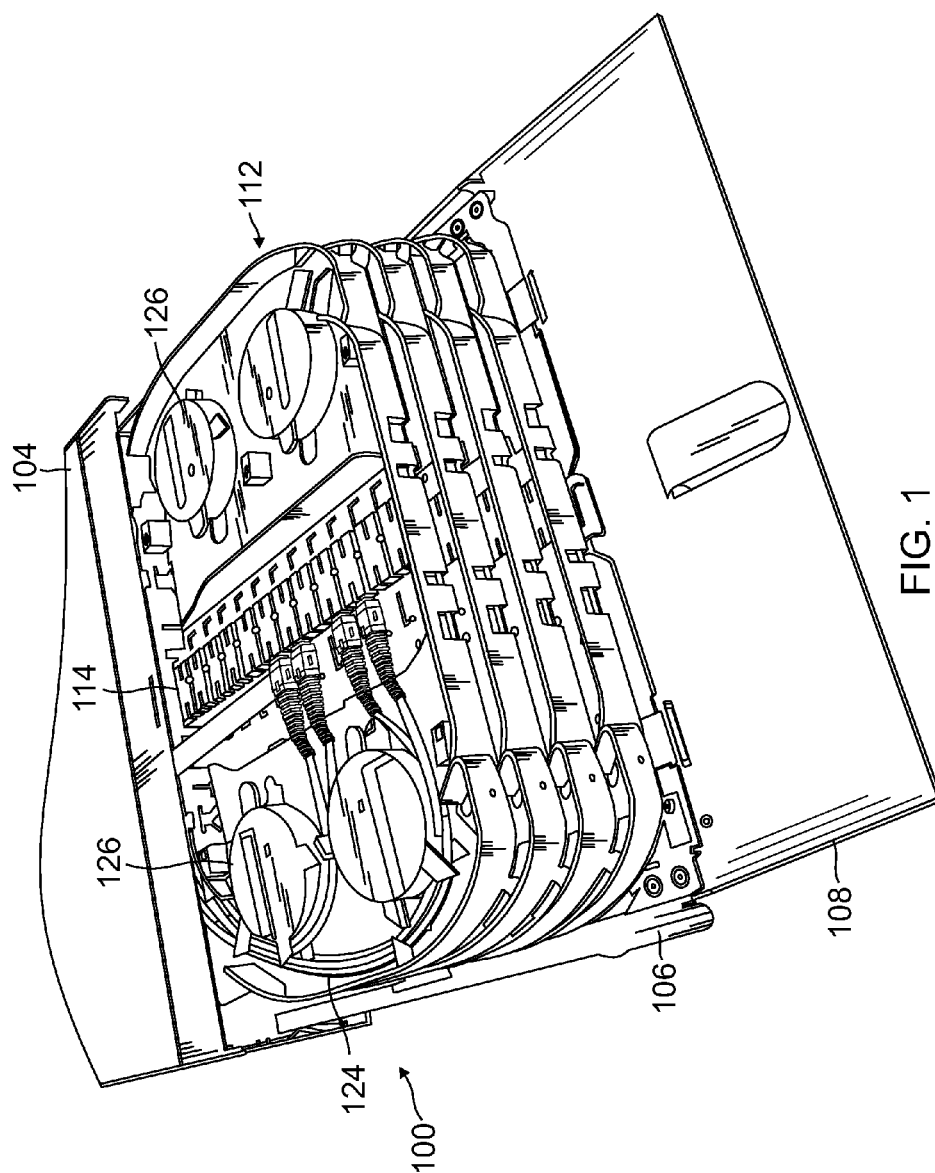
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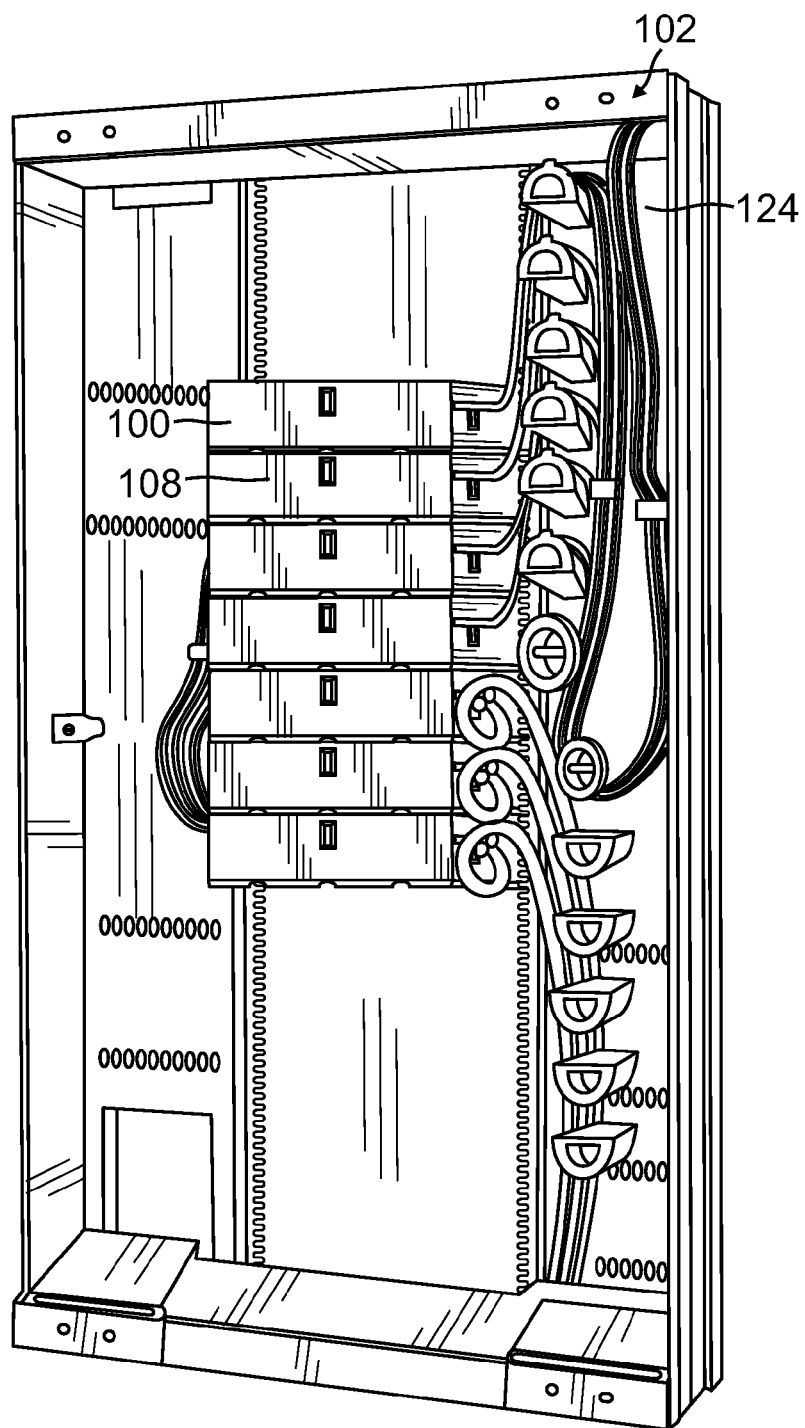


FIG. 2

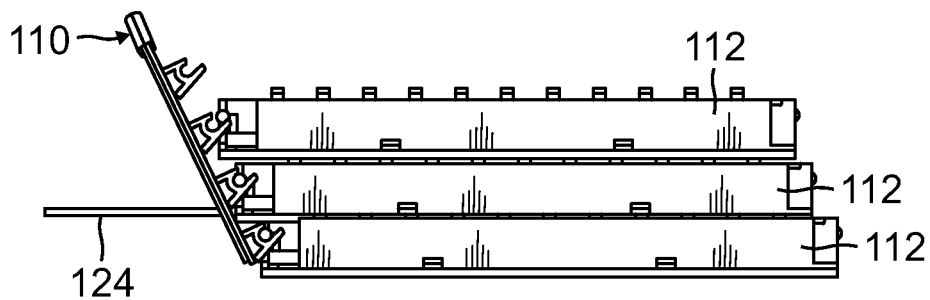


FIG. 3A

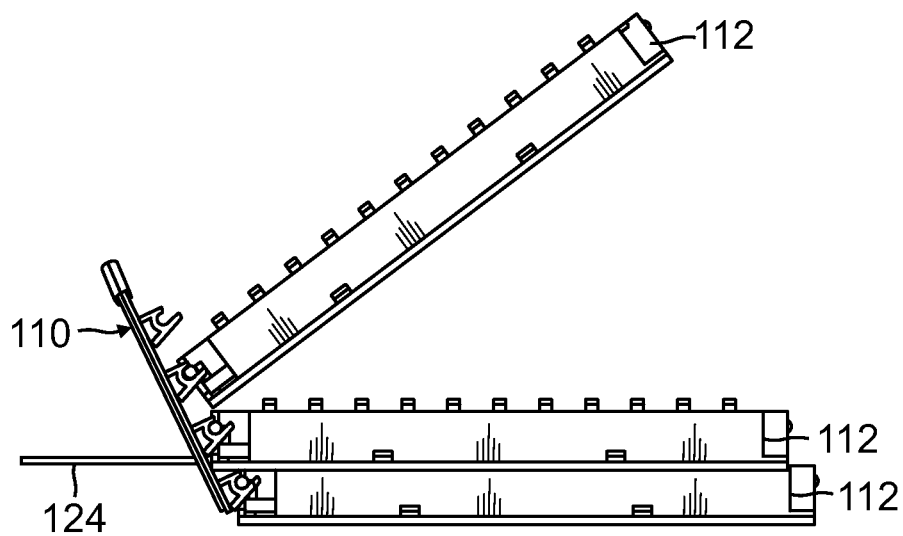


FIG. 3B

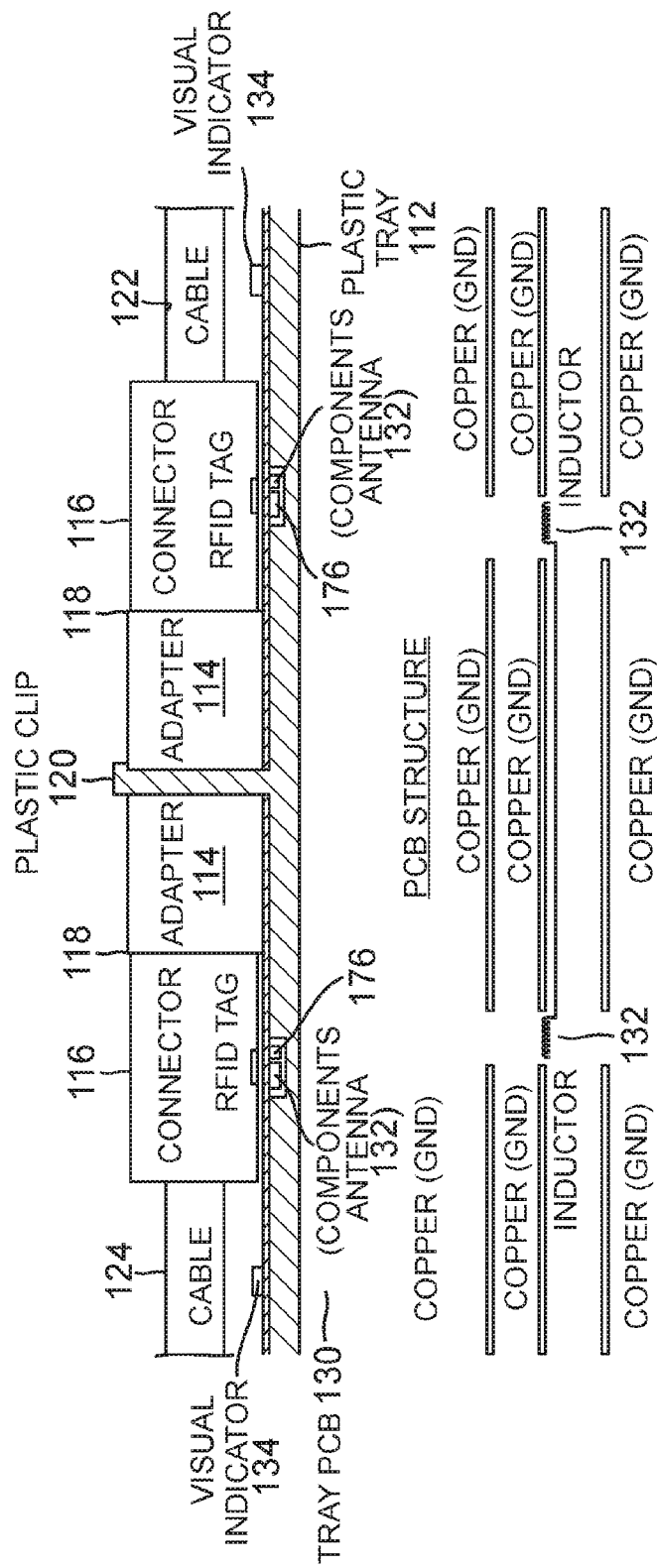


FIG. 4

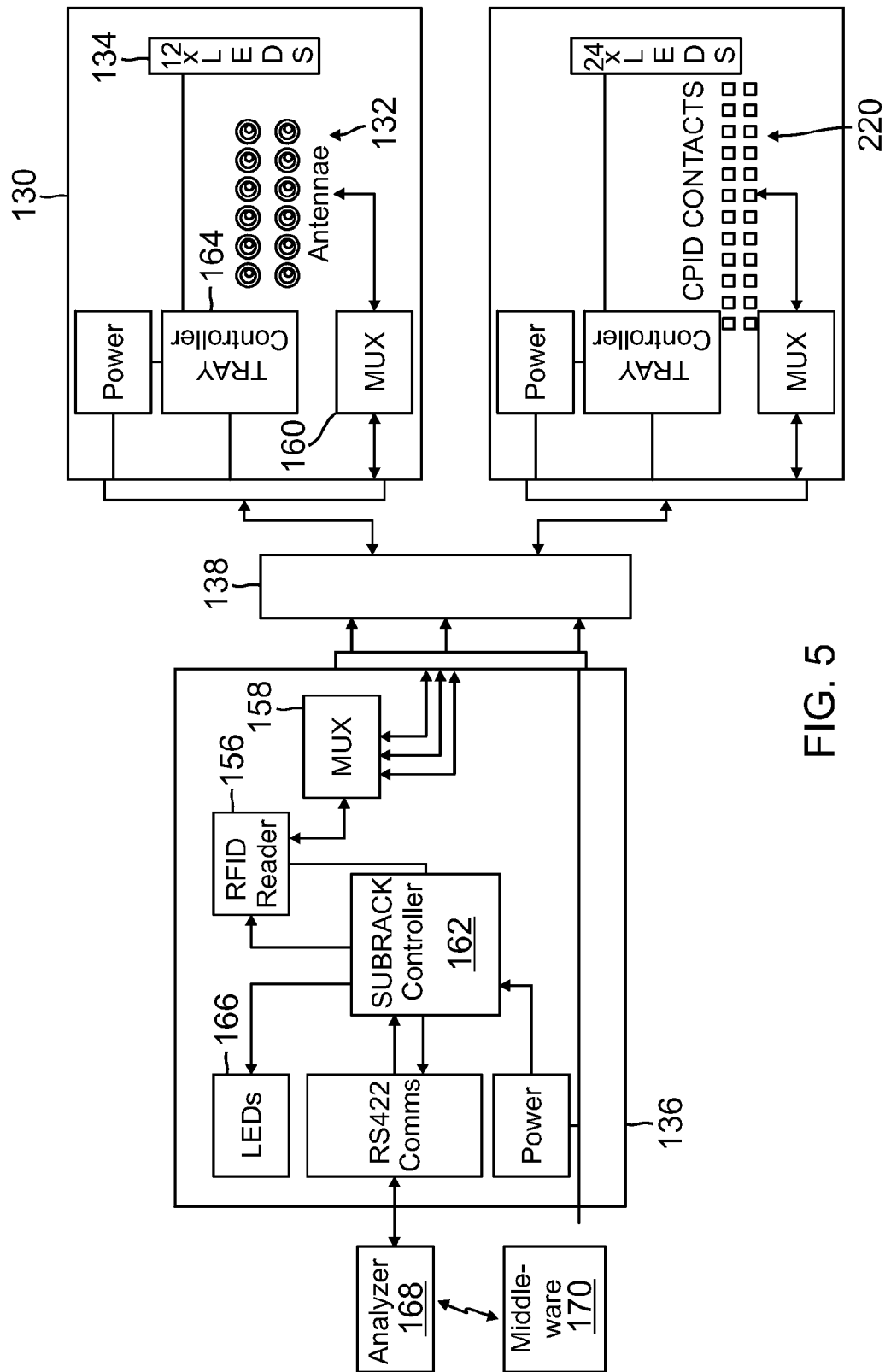


FIG. 5

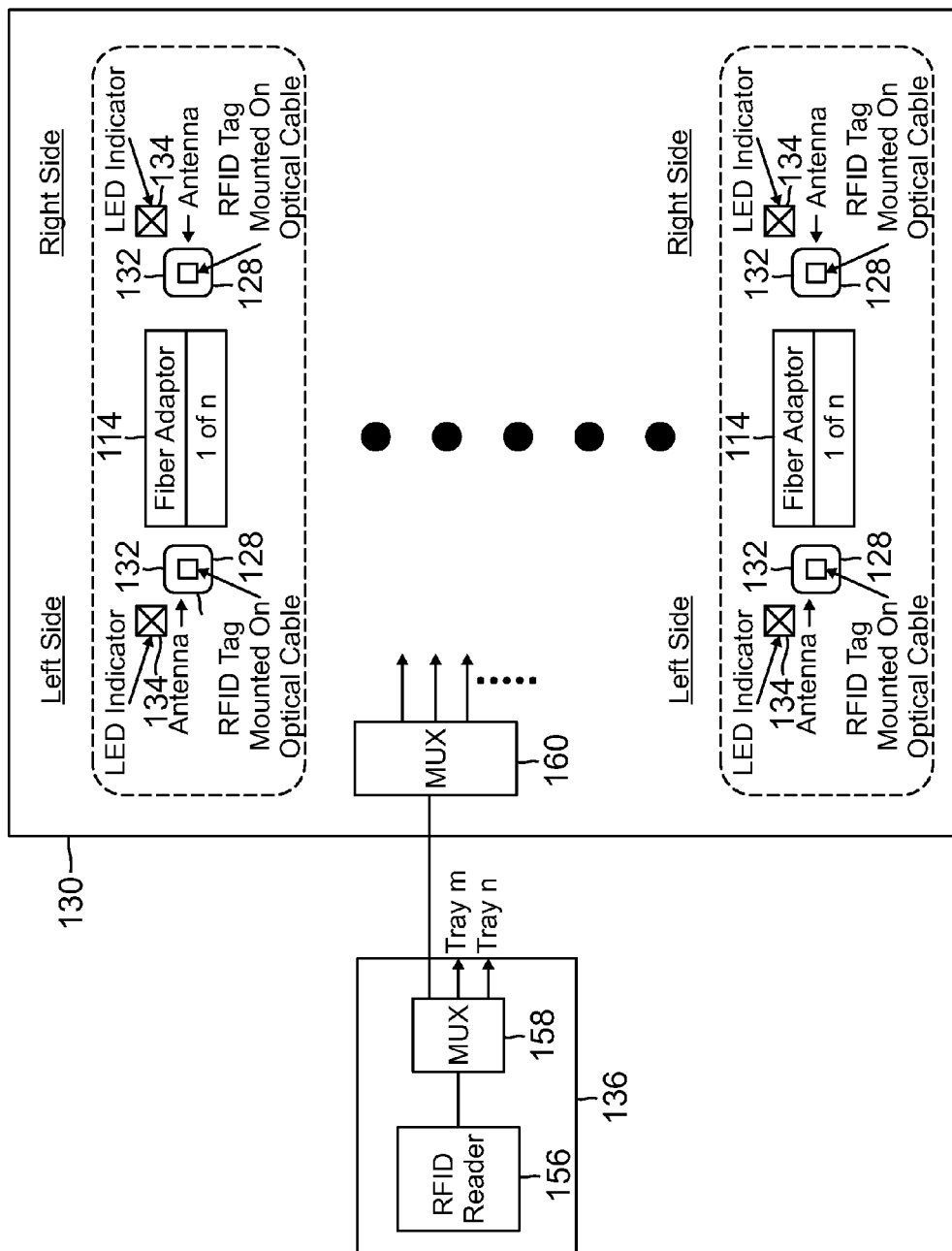


FIG. 6

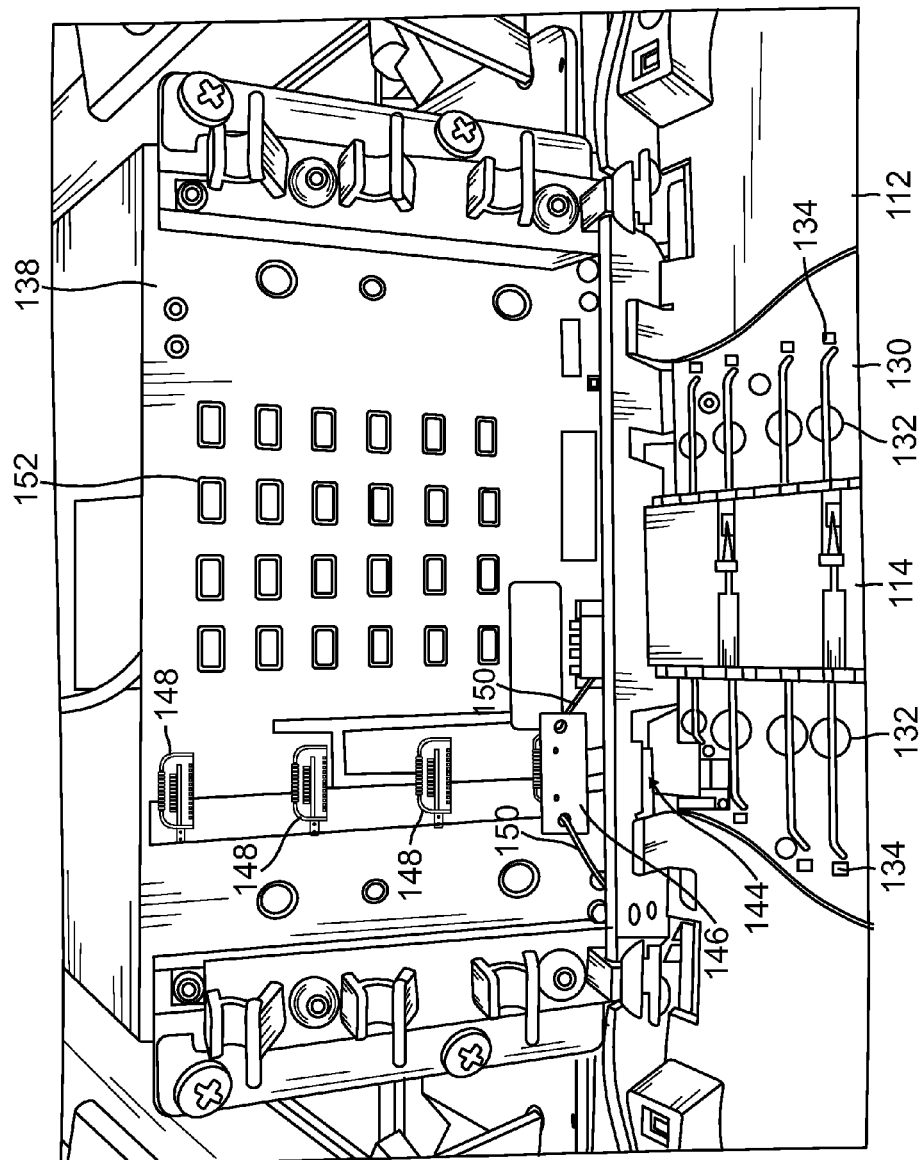


FIG. 7

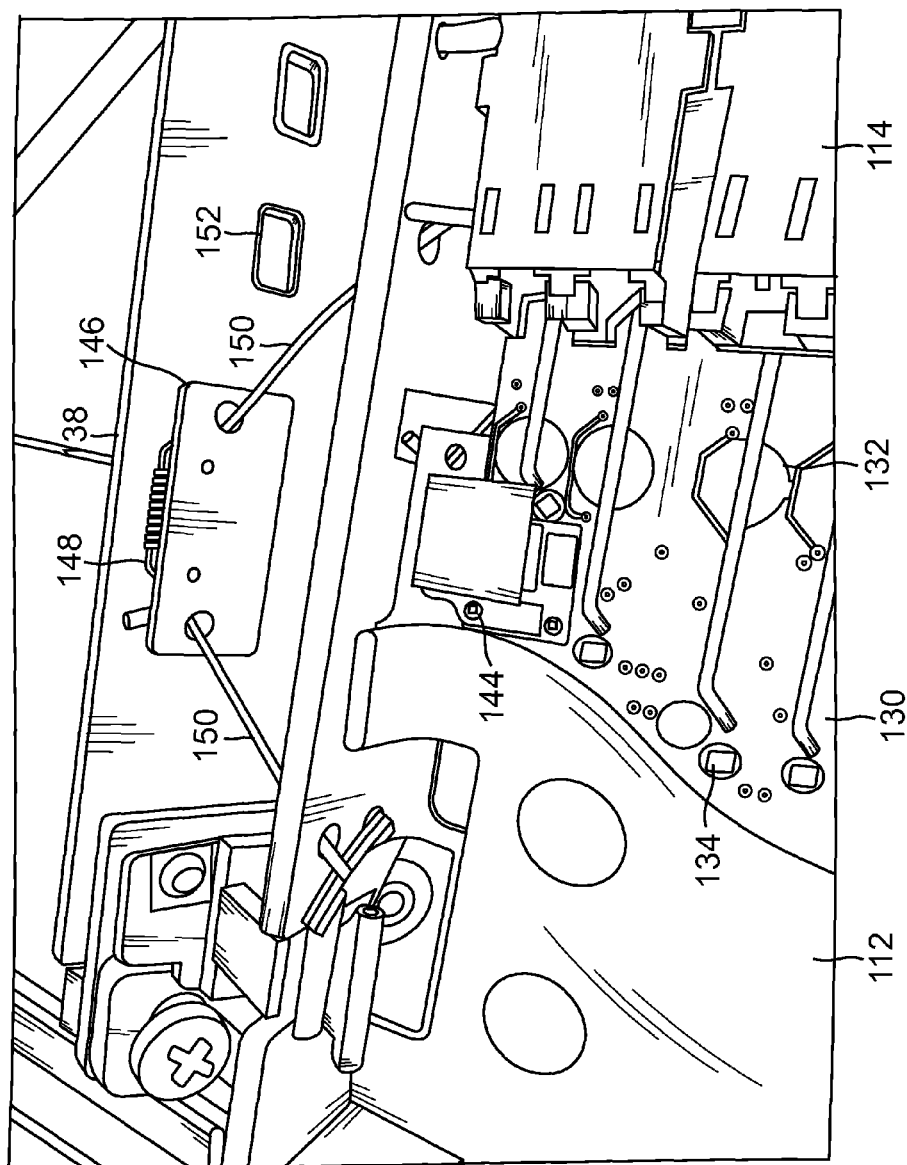


FIG. 8

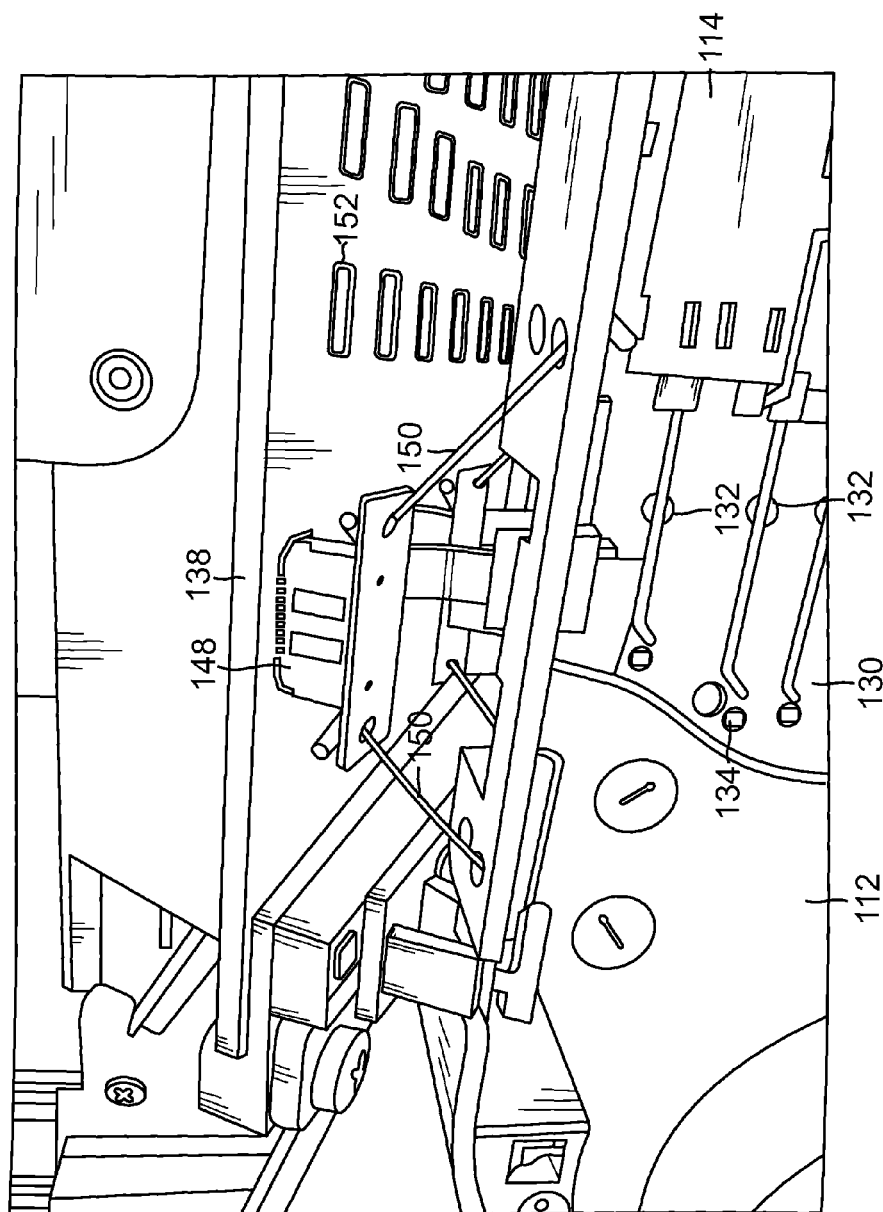


FIG. 9

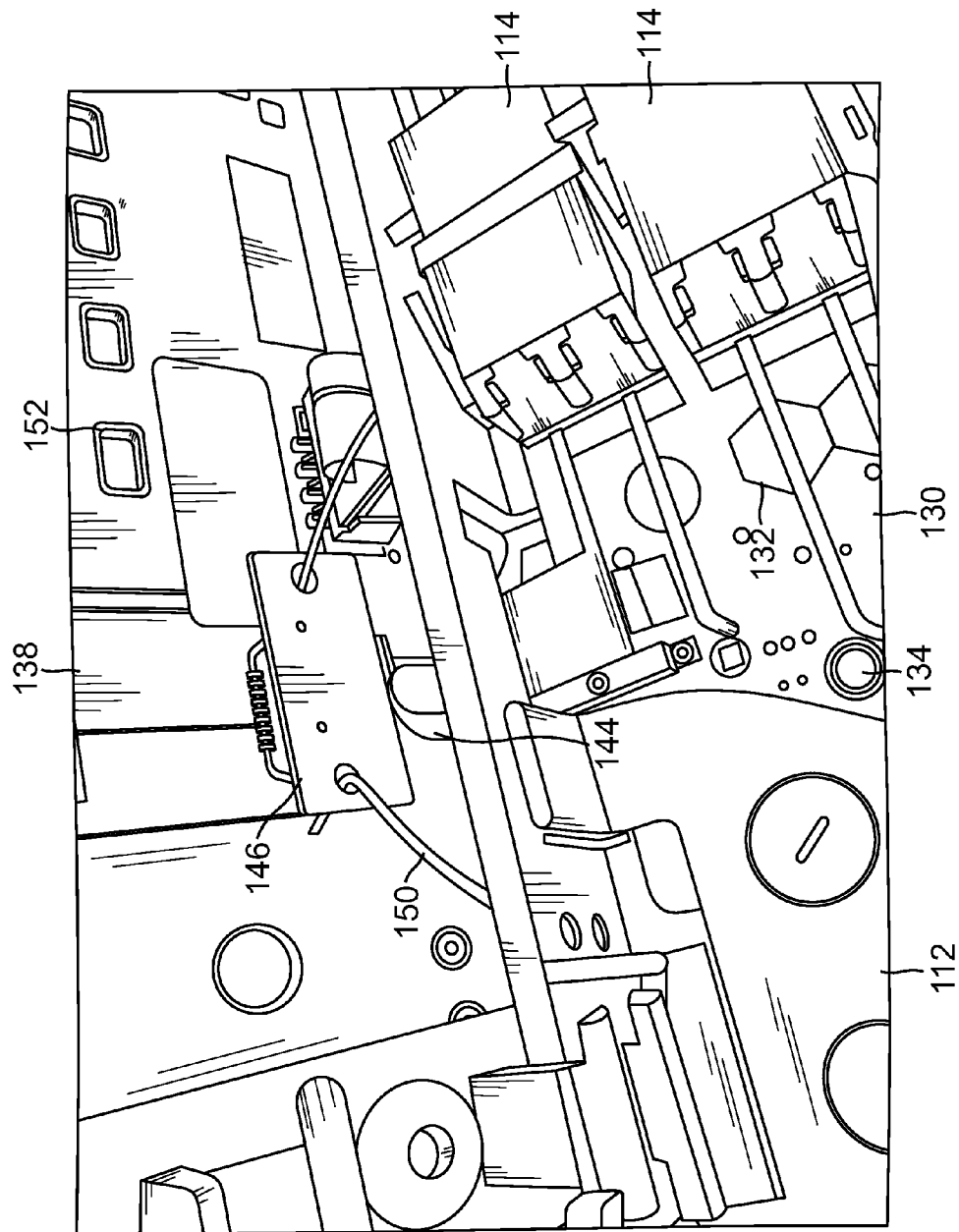


FIG. 10

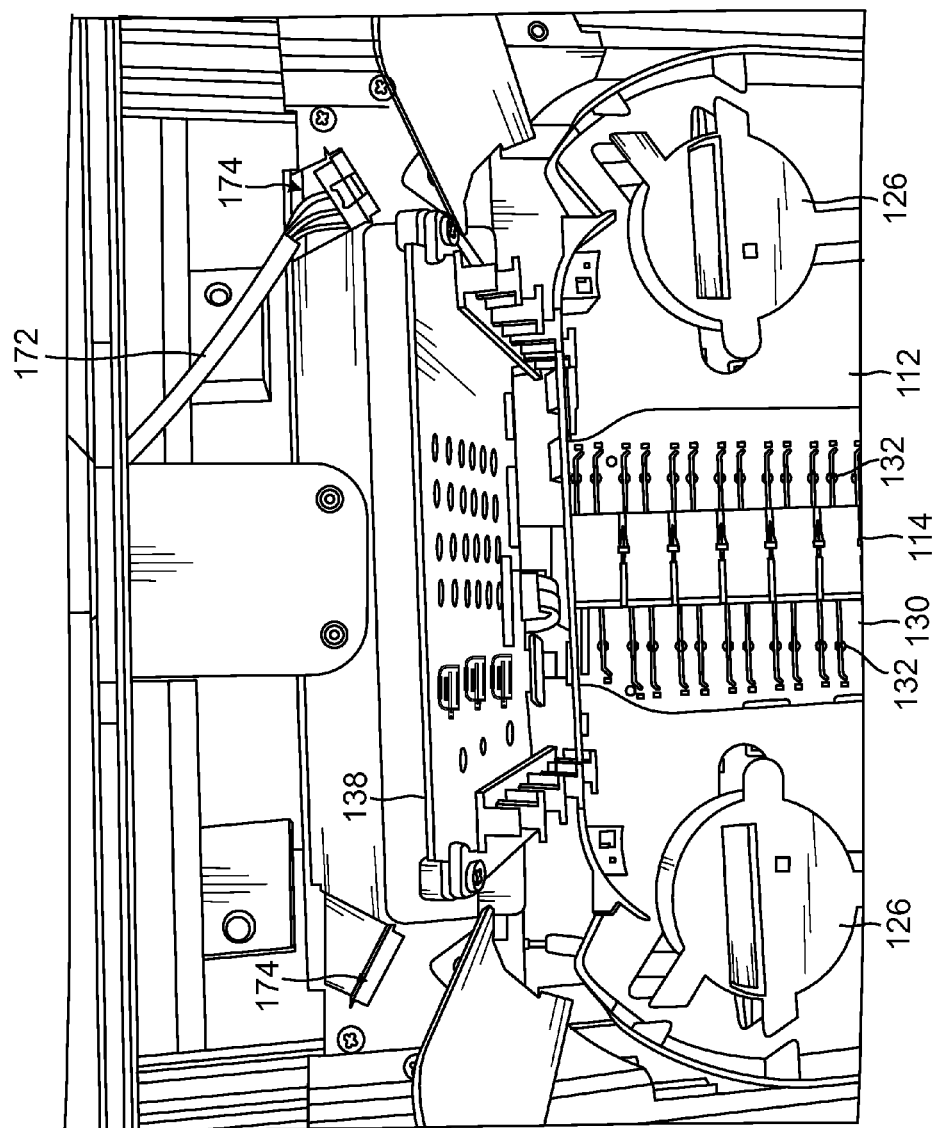


FIG. 11

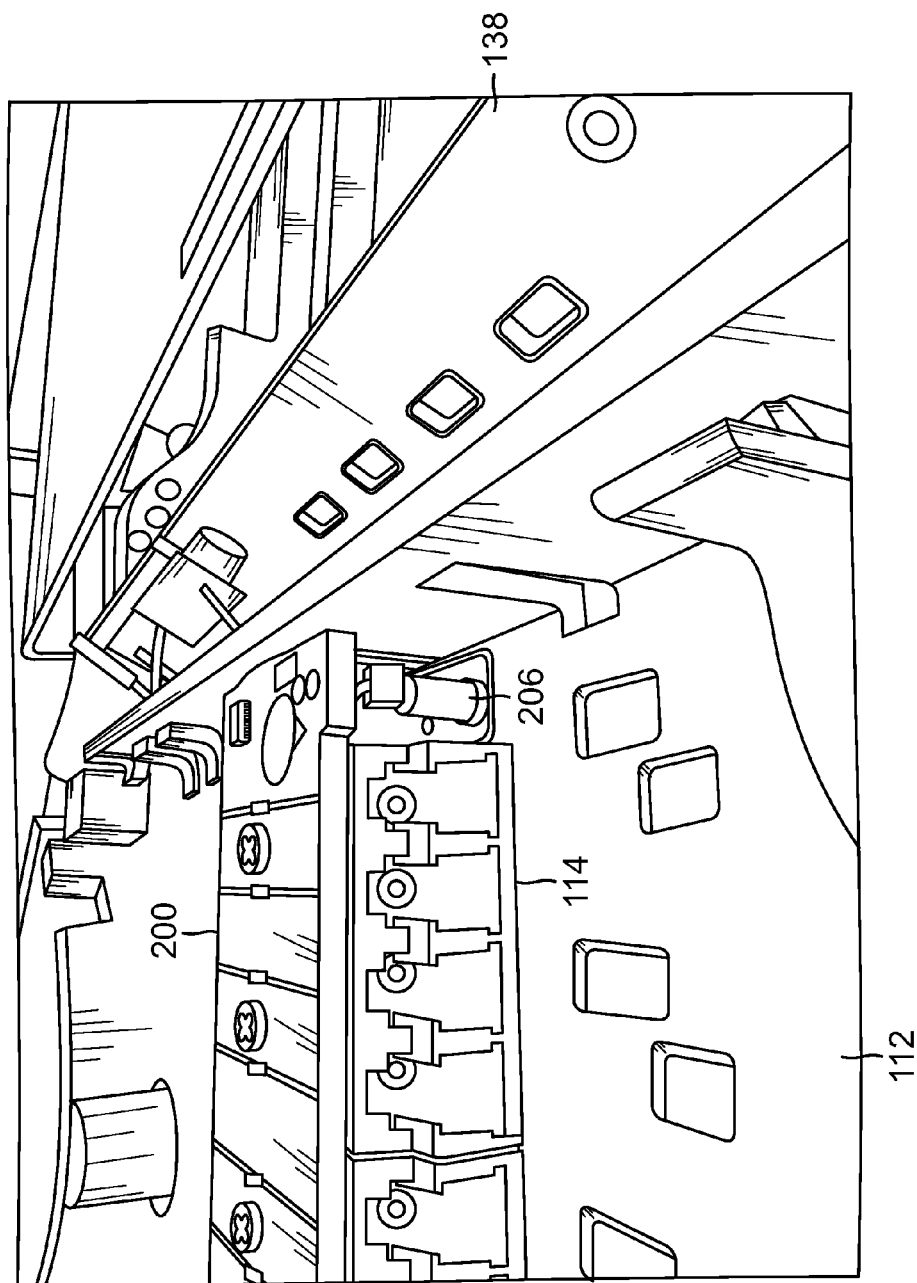
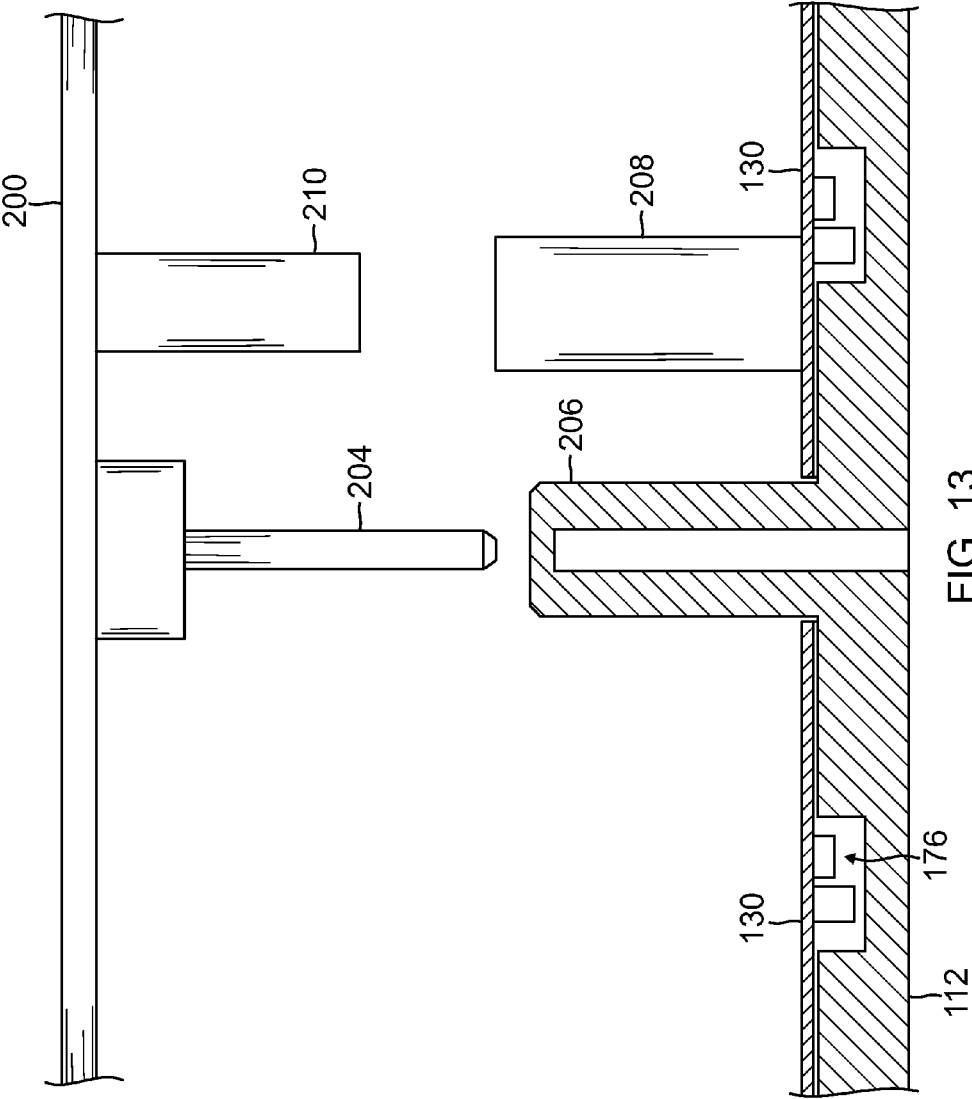


FIG. 12



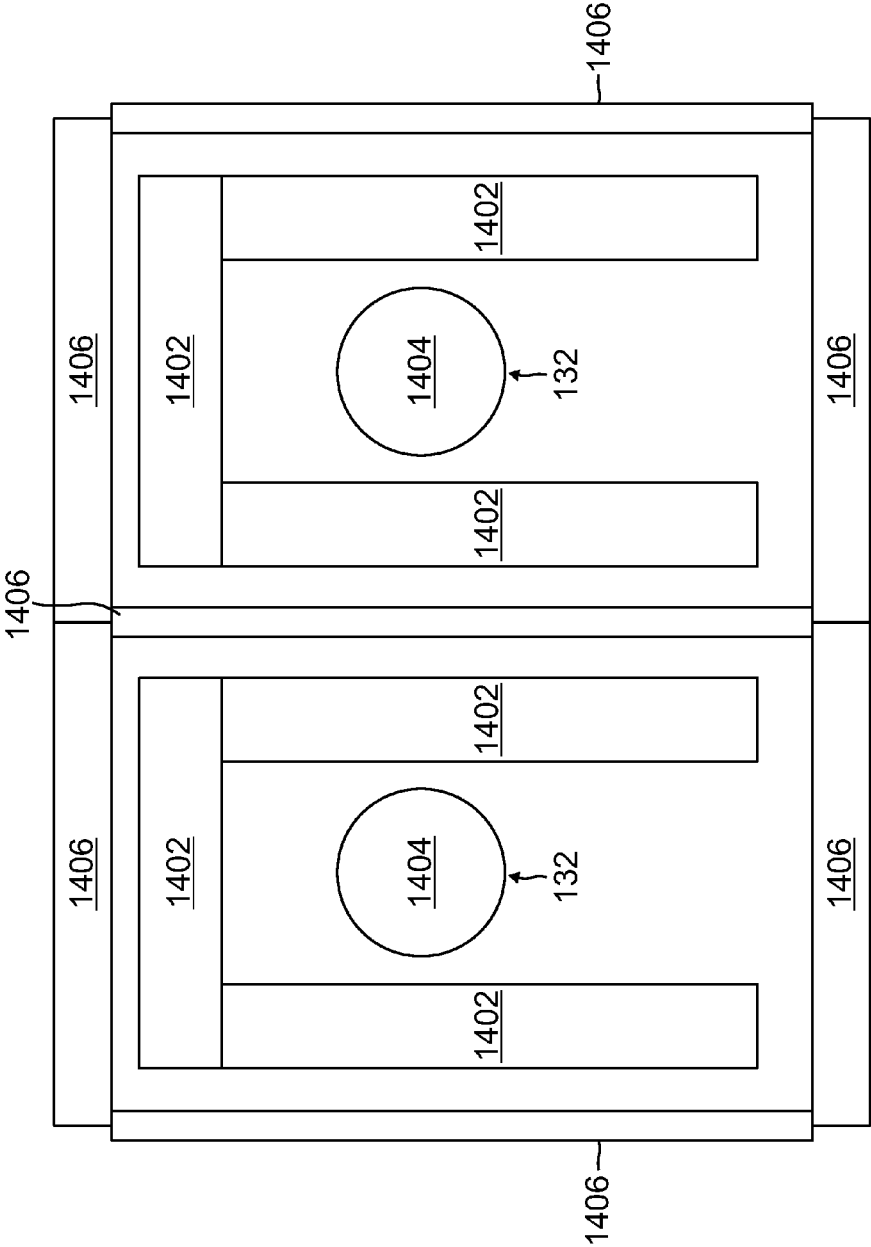


FIG. 14

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**PHYSICAL LAYER MANAGEMENT (PLM)
SYSTEM FOR USE WITH AN OPTICAL
DISTRIBUTION FRAME IN WHICH TRAYS
CAN BE SELECTIVELY REMOVED AND
RE-ATTACHED**

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED
APPLICATION

This application claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Patent Application Ser. No. 61/598,713, filed on Feb. 14, 2012, which is hereby incorporated herein by reference.

BACKGROUND

This application relates to providing physical layer management in an optical distribution frame.

SUMMARY

One embodiment is directed to a subrack comprising a backplate and at least one tray configured so that a plurality of connections can be made at a plurality of positions on the tray. Each of the plurality of connections involves at least one connector having information stored in a device associated therewith that can be read. The backplate and the tray are configured so that the tray can be selectively attached and removed from the backplate. The backplate and the tray are configured so that the devices associated with the connectors involved in making the connections can be read via the tray. The devices associated with the connections can be implemented, for example, using RFID tags or connection point identifier (CPID) storage devices (such as EEPROMs).

Another embodiment is directed to a method of using a subrack that comprises a backplate and at least one tray configured so that a plurality of connections can be made at a plurality of positions on the tray. Each of the plurality of connections involves at least one connector having information stored in a device associated therewith. The method comprises attaching the tray to the backplate; reading, via the tray, the devices associated with the connectors involved in making the connections; and removing the tray from the backplate and thereafter re-attaching the tray to the backplate. The devices associated with the connections can be implemented, for example, using RFID tags or connection point identifier (CPID) storage devices (such as EEPROMs).

DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 illustrates one exemplary embodiment of a subrack.

FIG. 2 illustrates one exemplary embodiment of a rack in which the exemplary subrack of FIG. 1 can be used.

FIGS. 3A-3B illustrate the stacking of trays in the exemplary subrack of FIG. 1.

FIG. 4 illustrates how a fiber adapter can be removably attached to a tray in the exemplary subrack of FIG. 1 as well as the structure of a printed circuit board used in the tray.

FIGS. 5-6 are block diagrams illustrating one example of how active components can be integrated into the exemplary subrack of FIG. 1.

FIGS. 7-11 illustrate the use of plastic tethers and cut-outs in the exemplary subrack of FIG. 1.

FIGS. 12-13 illustrate one way to attach a daughter board to a tray that is suitable for use with the exemplary subrack of FIG. 1.

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FIG. 14 illustrates another way in which radio frequency fields emitted by RFID antennas can be constrained that is suitable for use in the exemplary subrack of FIG. 1.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

FIG. 1 illustrates one exemplary embodiment of a subrack **100** (also referred to as a general patch splice patch tray or "GPST"). In one example, an optical distribution frame comprises one or more racks in which one or more subracks **100** are mounted. One example of a frame **102** in which multiple subracks are mounted is shown in FIG. 2.

Each subrack **100** comprises an enclosure **104** and a shelf **106**. Each subrack **100** is configured so that the shelf **106** can slide in and out of an opening formed in the front of the enclosure **104**. A front panel **108** is attached to the front of the shelf **106** so that when the shelf **106** has been completely pushed into the enclosure **104**, the front panel **108** can be flipped up to close the front opening of the enclosure **104**. Also, the front panel **108** can be flipped down to allow the shelf **106** to slide out of the enclosure **104**.

Each subrack **100** includes a backplate **110** that extends generally vertically from the top of the shelf **106**. Each subrack **100** includes multiple trays **112** that are vertically stacked. Each tray **112** is rotatably mounted to the backplate **110** so that the tray **112** can be flipped up in order to provide access to the tray **112** that is underneath it (if there is one). Also, each tray **112** is removably mounted to the backplate **110** so that the tray **112** can be easily removed from the subrack **100** in order to assist in providing access to that tray or to trays **112** that are underneath it. The tray **112** can also be easily re-mounted to the backplate **110**.

In this example, as shown in FIGS. 3A-3B, the backplate **110** is vertically disposed at angle so that the trays **112** are arranged in a stair step configuration (though this need not be the case).

In the exemplary embodiments described here, each tray **112** incorporates managed connectivity technology. Generally, a plurality of connections can be made at a plurality of positions on the tray **112**, where each of the plurality of connections involves at least one connector. The managed connectivity technology generally takes the form of a device (for example, an RFID tag or an EEPROM) that is attached to or integrated into at least one connector used to make each such connection. Information is stored in the managed connectivity connector device. In these examples, as explained in more detail below, the tray **112** is configured so that either side of the tray can be used as the patch side of the tray **112**. Also, the tray **112** is configured to read the information stored in the managed connectivity devices.

More specifically, in the example describe here, each tray **112** is configured to hold multiple fiber optic adapters **114** (where each adapter **114** is associated with one of the plurality of positions where a connection can be made). Each adapter **114** is configured to optically couple each optical fiber in a set of one or more optical fibers to a respective optical fiber in another set of one or more optical fibers. Typically, each such set of one or more optical fibers is terminated with a connector **116**. Most typically, each such adapter **114** is used to couple a single fiber to another single fiber. Each adapter **114** comprises two ports **118** to receive and hold the two connectors **116** in place while optically coupling the fibers.

Examples of fiber optic adapters **114** and connectors **116** that can be used include SC, LC, FC, LX.5, MTP, or MPO connectors. Other adapters and connectors can be used.

In this example, the fiber optic adapters **114** are arranged and held on the tray **112** so that the ports **118** on each side of

the adapters **114** all face the same direction and are aligned with one another. In the following description each tray **112** and the adapters **114** held by that tray **112** are described as having a first or left side and a second or right side.

Also, as shown in FIG. 4, in this example, each adapter **114** is held on the tray **112** by a plastic clip **120**. This allows each fiber optic adapter **114** to be easily removed and attached to the tray **112**.

In this example, each tray **112** can be configured to have one side of the tray **112** and adapters **114** serve as the “patch field” or “patch side”. The patch side is the side of the tray and adapters where the optical patching is performed. The other side of the tray **112** and adapters **114** serve as the “fixed side”. Typically, connectors **116** attached to one end of optical patch cords **122** are attached to the ports **118** on the patch side. Connectors attached to the other end of the patch cords exit that tray and are typically connected to a port on the patch side of another adapter or another device in the network.

Connectors **116** attached to one end of the fixed optical cabling **124** are attached to the ports **118** on the fixed sides. The fixed optical cabling **124** can be an optical pigtail, in which case the other end of the pigtail comprises a fiber that is spliced (for example, using a smooth) to another longer optical fiber that exits the tray **112**. The other end of the longer cable is connected as appropriate (for example, at another optical node located somewhere else in the network). The fixed optical cables **124** that are connected to the ports **118** on the fixed side of the tray **112** can themselves exit the tray **112** (like the patch cords **122** attached to the ports **118** on the patch side of the tray **112**) and can be connected as appropriate (for example, at another optical node located somewhere else in the network).

As shown in FIG. 1, each tray **112** typically is configured to include two removable island assemblies **126**, where one island assembly **126** is attached to the patch side of the tray **112** and the other island assembly **126** is attached to the fixed side of the tray **112**. The island assemblies **126** are configured to facilitate the routing and/or splicing of the fiber optic cabling that is attached to the ports **118** on that side. The island assemblies **126** in each tray can be reconfigured as needed by removing and inserting appropriate island assemblies **126**.

In this example, the connectors **116** attached to the patch side of the adapters **114** have RFID tags **128** (shown in FIG. 4) attached, or integrated into, them. The RFID tags **128** store a unique identifier for the connector **116** and/or the patch cord **122** that can be used to identify which patch cord **122** is attached to each patch port **118**. The RFID tags **128** can store other information, and can be written to as well as read from.

A printed circuit board **130** (also referred to here as the “tray PCB” **130**) is attached to the bottom of each tray **112**. The tray PCB **130** includes a respective RFID antenna or coil **132** and respective LED (or other visual indicator) **134** positioned near each side of each fiber optic adapter **114**. That is, each fiber optic adapter **114** has a associated pair of RFID antennas **132**, a first one of which is located near a first one port **118** of the adapter **114** and second one of which is located near the other port **118** of the adapter **114**.

Each RFID antenna or coil **132** is used for reading an RFID tag **130** inserted into the respective port **118**, and each LED or other visual indicator **134** is used for visually identifying the respective port **118** (for example, in connection with guiding a technician in carrying out a work order).

Even though the ports **118** on only one side of the tray **112** are used as the patch ports at any given time, there are RFID antennas or coils **132** and LEDs (or other visual indicators) **134** positioned on each side of the adapters **114** so that the

same tray **112** and tray PCB **130** can be used to support patching on either side of the tray **112**.

A PCB **136** is mounted in the shelf **106** of each subrack **100**. This PCB **136** is also referred to here as the “subrack PCB” **136** or the “subrack controller card” **136**. Components of the subrack PCB **136** are coupled to components on each of the tray PCBs **130** using a backplane PCB **138**. The subrack PCB **136** includes a flexible circuit or ribbon cable **140** to which a suitable backplane connector **142** is attached. This backplane connector **142** is attached to a connector on the backplane PCB **144**.

Likewise, each tray PCB **130** includes a flexible circuit or ribbon cable **144** to which a suitable backplane connector **146** is attached. This backplane connector **146** is attached to a connector **148** on the backplane PCB **138**. In this example, the backplane connector **148** of each tray **112** is held in place by a pair of tethers **150** (for example, plastic tethers typically used for attaching price tags to items of clothing and the like) that are attached to both the tray **112** and the back-plane connector **146**. See FIGS. 7-11. The tethers **150** and back-plane connector **146** are configured so that when the tray **112** is removed from the backplate **110** (backplane PCB **138**), the tethers **150** will pull the backplane connector **146** out of the connector **148** on the backplane **138** before the flexible circuit or ribbon cable **144** is pulled on. This is done to protect the flexible circuit or ribbon cable **144** from being damaged by removing the tray **112** from the backplane **138**. Also, the tethers **150** help hold the backplane connector **146** in place to ease insertion of the backplane connector **146** onto the connector **148** on the backplane PCB **138** when the tray **112** is re-attached.

In this example, the backplate **110** to which the trays **112** are attached comprises the backplane PCB **138**. That is, the functions of the backplate **110** are performed at least in part by the backplane PCB **138**. Moreover, the backplane PCB **138** includes cut outs **152** to which plastic strain relief cables **154** can be attached. Strain relief cables **154** are used to hold the fiber optic cabling attached to the ports **118** of that tray **112** in place so as to relieve the strain (for example, due to pulling on the cables) that otherwise might affect the cables or the connections provided at the ports **118** or splices housed in the tray **112**.

As shown in FIGS. 5 and 6, the subrack PCB **136** includes an RFID reader **156**. The RFID reader **156** can be selectively coupled to the pair of RFID antennas or coils **132** positioned near each of the adapters **114** in each subrack **100**. To do this, the subrack PCB **136** includes a first multiplexer **158** to couple the RF I/O port of the RFID reader **156** to another multiplexer **160** located on one of the tray PCBs **130**. A multiplexer **160** located on each tray PCB **130** is used to selectively couple the RF I/O port of the RFID reader **156** to one of the RFID antenna pairs **132** included on that tray PCB **130**.

In this way, only one RFID reader **156** is needed to read RFID tags **128** associated with each of the many fiber optic adapters **114** held on the many trays **112** of the subrack **100**.

A controller **162** is located on the subrack PCB **136**, and a controller **164** is located on each of the tray PCBs **130**. Each controller **162** and **164** can be implemented using a suitable programmable processor for executing software. The software executing on the programmable processor performs at least some of the processing described here as being performed by each of the controllers **162** and **164**.

The subrack controller **162** is coupled to the RFID reader **156**, the subrack multiplexer **158**, and an LED **166** that is mounted to the subrack **100** (for example, to the front panel

108 of the subrack 100). Also, the subrack controller 162 is coupled to each of the tray controllers 164 via the backplane 138.

Each tray controller 164 is coupled to the tray multiplexer 160 on that tray 112 and the LEDs (or other visual indicators) 134 on that tray 112.

The subrack controller 162 is coupled to an overall rack controller 168 (also referred to here as the “analyzer”). The analyzer 168 is configured to cause the subrack controller 162 and the tray controllers 164 to read the RFID tag 128 that is attached to any connector 116 inserted into each patch port 118. This can be done in a polling manner, where periodically each such patch port 118 is read. This can be done in other ways as well. Reading of a particular RFID tag 128 is done by instructing the subrack controller 162 and tray controller 164 to configure the multiplexers 158 and 160 to couple the RFID reader 156 to the appropriate RFID antennas or coils 132.

In order to reduce the I/O pin count and trace routing complexity, for a given adapter 114, the RFID antennas 132 and LEDs 134 on both sides of the adapter 114 are coupled to the tray controller 164 and to power and ground using the same PCB traces. That is, a first set of PCB traces for coupling the RFID antennas 132 and LEDs 134 on the left side of each adapter 114 and a second, separate set of PCB for coupling the RFID antennas 132 and LEDs 134 on the right side of that adapter 114 need not be provided; instead, for each adapter 114, only a single set of PCB traces need be provided for coupling the RFID antennas 132 and LEDs 134 on both sides of each adapter 114 to the tray controller 164 and power and ground.

The analyzer 168 is also configured to communicate the information read from the RFID tags 128 to middleware software 170 in the manner described in the following US patent applications (all of which are hereby incorporated herein by reference): U.S. Provisional Patent Application Ser. No. 61/152,624, filed on Feb. 13, 2009, titled “MANAGED CONNECTIVITY SYSTEMS AND METHODS” (also referred to here as the “624 Application”); U.S. patent application Ser. No. 12/705,497, filed on Feb. 12, 2010, titled “AGGREGATION OF PHYSICAL LAYER INFORMATION RELATED TO A NETWORK” (is also referred to here as the ‘497 Application); U.S. patent application Ser. No. 12/705,501, filed on Feb. 12, 2010, titled “INTER-NETWORKING DEVICES FOR USE WITH PHYSICAL LAYER INFORMATION” (also referred to here as the ‘501 Application); U.S. patent application Ser. No. 12/705,506, filed on Feb. 12, 2010, titled “NETWORK MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS FOR USE WITH PHYSICAL LAYER INFORMATION” (also referred to here as the ‘506 Application); U.S. patent application Ser. No. 12/705,514, filed on Feb. 12, 2010, titled “MANAGED CONNECTIVITY DEVICES, SYSTEMS, AND METHODS” (also referred to here as the ‘514 Application); U.S. Provisional Patent Application Ser. No. 61/252,395, filed on Oct. 16, 2009, titled “MANAGED CONNECTIVITY IN ELECTRICAL SYSTEMS AND METHODS THEREOF” (also referred to here as the “395 Application”); U.S. Provisional Patent Application Ser. No. 61/253,208, filed on Oct. 20, 2009, titled “ELECTRICAL PLUG FOR MANAGED CONNECTIVITY SYSTEMS” (also referred to here as the “208 Application”); U.S. Provisional Patent Application Ser. No. 61/252,964, filed on Oct. 19, 2009, titled “ELECTRICAL PLUG FOR MANAGED CONNECTIVITY SYSTEMS” (also referred to here as the “964 Application”); U.S. Provisional Patent Application Ser. No. 61/252,386, filed on Oct. 16, 2009, titled “MANAGED CONNECTIVITY IN FIBER OPTIC SYSTEMS AND METHODS THEREOF” (also referred to here as the “386

Application”); U.S. Provisional Patent Application Ser. No. 61/303,961, filed on Feb. 12, 2010, titled “FIBER PLUGS AND ADAPTERS FOR MANAGED CONNECTIVITY” (the “961 Application”); and U.S. Provisional Patent Application Ser. No. 61/303,948, filed on Feb. 12, 2010, titled “BLADED COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM” (the “948 Application”).

In one example, the middleware software 170 includes, or is coupled to a database or other data store (not shown) for storing the information provided to it. The middleware software 170 also includes functionality that provides an interface for external devices or entities to access the information maintained by the middleware software 170. This access can include retrieving information from the middleware software 170 as well as supplying information to the middleware software 170. In this example, the middleware software 170 is implemented as “middleware” that is able to provide such external devices and entities with transparent and convenient access to the information maintained by the middleware software 170. Because the middleware software 170 aggregates information from the relevant devices in the network and provides external devices and entities with access to such information, the external devices and entities do not need to individually interact with all of the devices in the network that provide such information, nor do such devices need to have the capacity to respond to requests from such external devices and entities.

The middleware software 170, in this example, implements an application programming interface (API) by which application-layer functionality can gain access to the physical layer information maintained by the middleware software 170 using a software development kit (SDK) that describes and documents the API.

One example of such middleware software 170 is the Infrastructure Configuration Manager (ICM) that is commercially available from TE Connectivity.

The analyzer 168 is also configured to instruct the subrack controller 162 and/or the tray controllers 164 to turn on the LEDs (or other visual indicators) 134 as appropriate (for example, in connection with instructing a technician in carrying out a work order or to signal an error condition). For example, the analyzer 168 can be configured to guide a technician in carrying out a work order by visually signaling which ports 118 are to be affected by a particular step in the work order using the LEDs 134. Also, the LEDs 134 can be used to provide a visual indication as to whether each step was properly carried out. Data read from the RFID tags 128 is also used to determine if each step was properly carried out (for example, in similar manner as is described in the previously mentioned US patent applications).

Also, data can be written to the RFID tags 128 in the same manner.

Communications occur between the analyzer 168 and the subrack and tray PCBs 136 and 130 via a cable 172 that connects the analyzer 168 to the subrack PCB 136. Also, power is supplied to the components on the subrack and tray PCBs 136 and 130 from the analyzer 168 on this cable 172. In one example, this connection is implemented as a RS422 serial connection. In this example, as shown in FIG. 9, the subrack PCB 136 includes two connectors 174 that can be used for connecting the cable 172 from the analyzer 168 to the subrack PCB 136. Also, these two connectors 174 can be oriented at an angle (for example, 30 degrees to 45 degrees) to facilitate routing this cable 172 in a manner that is compatible with the fiber optic cables in the rack 102. Either of the two connectors 174 can be used depending on what is more convenient for connecting to the analyzer 168. Also, the two

connectors **174** can be used to connect multiple subracks **100** to the analyzer **168** using a daisy chain topology.

As shown in FIGS. **4** and **10**, the tray **112** can include pockets **176** in the plastic of the tray **112** to accommodate components that are mounted to the underside of the tray PCB board **130**. This enables the tray PCB **130** to lay flat in the tray **112**.

In order to support a high density of RFID antennas **132** and fiber optic adapters **114**, it is helpful to be able to localize or constrain the field emitted from each RFID antenna **134** so that only the appropriate RFID tag **128** is energized and read. One of example of how to do this is shown in FIG. **4**. The ground planes surround the conductive plane in which the RFID inductors (coil or antenna) are formed. Openings are formed in the upper ground plane in order to enable RF signals to pass between the RFID antenna **134** and any RFID tag **128** positioned above it. The rest of the ground plane serves to constrain the RFID signals. Also, in this example, the openings formed in the bottom of the ground plane serve to let some of the RFID signals escape through the bottom to reduce the size of the field that is created above the tray PCB **130**.

FIG. **14** illustrates another way in which radio frequency fields emitted by RFID antennas can be constrained that is suitable for use in the exemplary subrack of FIG. **1**. In the example shown in FIG. **14**, the layers of the tray PCB **130** are configured so that, for each RFID antenna **132** on each tray **113**, the tray PCB **130** includes a multi-layer coil assembly **1404** that implements that RFID antenna **132**.

The layers of the tray PCB **130** are also configured so that, for each RFID antenna **132** on each tray **113**, the tray PCB **130** includes a respective C-shaped open copper track feature **1402** and a respective O-shaped closed copper track feature **1404** that concentrically surround the coil assembly **1404**. In the particular example shown in FIG. **14**, the C-shaped open feature **1404** is located inside of the O-shaped closed feature **1406**. Each respective coil assembly **1402**, C-shaped open feature **1404**, and O-shaped closed feature **1406** are isolated from each another.

Each C-shaped open feature **1402** provides a dampening field for producing a rectangular region of interest (ROI) box for addressing misalignment problems that may otherwise occur in general usage. Each C-shaped open feature **1402** also provides rear field dampening to the tray **112** below. Each O-shaped closed features **1406** provides protection against cross-talk that may otherwise occur among adjacent RFID antennas **132**, where each such O-shaped closed feature **1406** is implemented as shorted turn that produces a corresponding nulling field.

In some embodiments, it is necessary to position a daughter board **200** onto the tray PCBs **130**. For example, in some embodiments, a storage device (such as an EEPROM) is attached to each of the fiber optic connectors **116**, which is read in the manner described in the United States patent applications cited above. This is done instead of using RFID technology to read RFID tags **128**. One example of this type of technology is the QUAREO technology that is commercially available from TE Connectivity. This technology is also referred to here as "Connection Point Identifier" or "CPID" technology.

In this example (which can be implemented using QUAREO technology), the storage device interface comprises four leads—a power lead, a ground lead, a data lead, and an extra lead that is reserved for future use. A suitable protocol (for example, the UNI/O protocol) can be used for communicating over the single data lead.

In such an example, four contacts are positioned above each adapter **114** that are configured to come into electrical contact with the four corresponding storage-device leads on a connector inserted in that adapter **114**. Appropriate traces are provided on the tray PCB **130** in the tray **112** to couple these adapter contacts to the tray controller **164** via multiplexer **160** and to power and ground. The connectivity between the sub-rack controller **162** and the tray controllers **164** is provided in the manner described above. In this way, the QUAREO (or similar CPID) technology can be integrated into what is otherwise an RFID subrack **100** to support the mixing and matching of CPID and RFID trays in the field.

The contacts for reading the storage devices (also referred to here as "CPID contacts" **220**) can be attached to a daughter board **200** (shown in FIGS. **12** and **13**). It is helpful to precisely align this daughter board **200** while attaching it to an appropriate daughter-board connector **202** on the tray PCB **136**. One way of doing this is shown in FIGS. **12** and **13**. One side of the daughter board **200** has one or more metal pins **204** extending from it. The tray PCB **136** includes a corresponding plastic post **206**. The pins **204** and posts **206** are arranged so that each pin **204** can be inserted into the top of a corresponding one of the posts **206** on the tray PCB **136**. In this way, the connectors **210** and **208** on the daughterboard **200** and tray PCB **136** can more easily be connected while providing more precise alignment of the items on the daughter board **200** (for example, the interfaces for reading the EEPROMS, which in this example are positioned above the fiber optic adapters **114**, which are preferably precisely aligned in order to read the EEPROMS).

Also, the CPID contacts **220** can be placed on both sides of the adapters **114** so that either side of the adapters **114** can be used as the patch field in the manner described above connection with RFID versions of trays. In order to reduce the I/O pin count and trace routing complexity, for a given adapter **114**, CPID contacts **220** on both sides of the adapter **114** are coupled to the tray controller **164** and to power and ground using the same PCB traces. That is, a first set of PCB traces for coupling the CPID contacts **220** on the left side of each adapter **114** and a second, separate set of PCB for coupling the CPID contacts **22**—on the right side of that adapter **114** need not be provided; instead, for each adapter **114**, only a single set of PCB traces need be provided for coupling the CPID contacts **220** on both sides of each adapter **114** to the tray controller **164** and power and ground.

Although the preceding examples have been described above in connection with optical connectors and adapters, one of ordinary skill in the art can recognize that the techniques described here can be used with other types of communication media, such as copper communication media, connectors, and jacks and plugs (for example, those described in the United States patent applications described above).

A number of embodiments have been described. Nevertheless, it will be understood that various modifications to the described embodiments may be made without departing from the spirit and scope of the claimed invention.

Example Embodiments

Example 1 includes a subrack comprising: a backplate; at least one tray configured so that a plurality of connections can be made at a plurality of positions on the tray, each of the plurality of connections involving at least one connector having information stored in a device associated therewith that can be read; wherein the backplate and the tray are configured so that the tray can be selectively attached and removed from the backplate; and wherein the backplate and the tray are

configured so that the devices associated with the connectors involved in making the connections can be read via the tray.

Example 2 includes the subrack of Example 1, wherein the devices associated with each connector comprises RFID tags, wherein the backplate and the tray are configured so that the RFID tags associated with the connectors involved in making the connections can be read via the tray.

Example 3 includes the subrack of Example 2, wherein each tray comprises a plurality of RFID antennas, each of the RFID antennas being associated with a respective one of the positions, wherein each of the plurality of RFID antennas can be selectively coupled to an RFID reader in order to read the RFID tags associated with the connectors involved in making the connections.

Example 4 includes the subrack of Example 1, wherein the devices associated each connector comprises connection point identifier (CPID) storage devices, wherein the backplate and the tray are configured so that the CPID storage devices associated with the connectors involved in making the connections can be read via the tray.

Example 5 includes the subrack of any of the Examples 1-4, wherein the backplate is implemented as a backplane printed circuit board.

Example 6 includes the subrack of Example 5, wherein the backplane printed circuit board comprises a tray connector, wherein the tray has attached thereto a backplane connector that is configured to be connected to the tray connector of the backplane printed circuit board in connection with the tray being attached to the backplate; and wherein the tray further comprises at least one plastic tether attached to the backplane connector, wherein the plastic tether is configured to pull the backplane connector out of the tray connector on the backplane printed circuit board in connection with the tray being removed from the backplate.

Example 7 includes the subrack of any of the Examples 5-6, wherein the backplane printed circuit board comprises at least one cut out to which a strain relief cable can be attached.

Example 8 includes the subrack of any of the Examples 1-7, further comprising a plurality of trays.

Example 9 includes the subrack of any of the Examples 1-8 wherein each tray comprises a plurality of visual indicators, each of the visual indicators being associated with a respective one of the positions.

Example 10 includes the subrack of any of the Examples 1-9, wherein each tray is configured so that a plurality of fiber optic adapters can be attached to the printed circuit board, each of the plurality of fiber optic adapters associated with a respective one of the positions.

Example 11 includes the subrack of any of the Examples 1-10, further comprising a subrack controller; wherein each tray comprises: a tray controller; and at least two communication ports, each of which is coupled to the tray controller, wherein the subrack is configured so that the tray controller can be coupled to the subrack controller via one or more of the communication ports.

Example 12 includes the subrack of Example 11, wherein the communication ports are angled.

Example 13 includes the subrack of any of the Examples 1-12, wherein each tray includes pockets formed in the tray to accommodate electronics.

Example 14 includes the subrack of any of the Examples 1-13, wherein the each of the plurality of connections is made using at least one of optical cabling and metallic cabling.

Example 15 includes a method of using a subrack that comprises a backplate and at least one tray configured so that a plurality of connections can be made at a plurality of positions on the tray, each of the plurality of connections involv-

ing at least one connector having information stored in a device associated therewith, the method comprising: attaching the tray to the backplate; reading, via the tray, the devices associated with the connectors involved in making the connections; and removing the tray from the backplate and thereafter re-attaching the tray to the backplate.

Example 16 includes the method of Example 15, wherein the devices associated each connector comprises RFID tags; and wherein reading, via the tray, the devices associated with the connectors involved in making the connections comprises reading, via the tray, the RFID tags associated with the connectors involved in making the connections.

Example 17 includes the method of Example 16, wherein each tray comprises a plurality of RFID antennas, each of the RFID antennas being associated with a respective one of the positions; and wherein reading the RFID tags associated with the connectors involved in making the connections via the tray comprises selectively coupling each of the plurality of RFID antennas to an RFID reader in order to read the RFID tags associated with the connectors involved in making the connections.

Example 18 includes the method of Example 15, wherein the devices associated each connector comprises connection point identifier (CPID) storage devices; and wherein reading, via the tray, the devices associated with the connectors involved in making the connections comprises reading the CPID storage devices associated with the connectors involved in making the connections via the tray.

Example 19 includes the method of any of the Examples 15-18, wherein the backplate is implemented as a backplane printed circuit board.

Example 20 includes the method of Example 19, wherein the backplane printed circuit board comprises a tray connector, wherein the tray has attached thereto a backplane connector that is configured to be connected to the tray connector of the backplane printed circuit board in connection with the tray being attached to the backplate; and wherein the tray further comprises at least one plastic tether attached to the backplane connector, wherein the plastic tether is configured to pull the backplane connector out of the tray connector on the backplane printed circuit board in connection with the tray being removed from the backplate.

Example 21 includes the method of any of the Examples 19-20, further comprising attaching a strain relief cable to the tray using a cut out formed in the backplane printed circuit board.

The invention claimed is:

1. A subrack comprising:
a backplate;

at least one tray configured so that a plurality of connections can be made at a plurality of positions on the tray, each of the plurality of connections involving a respective at least two cables, wherein at least one of the cables involved with each of the connections is terminated with a respective cable connector having a device associated therewith that stores information in a device associated therewith that can be read;

wherein the backplate and the tray are configured so that the tray can be selectively attached and removed from the backplate; and

wherein the backplate and the tray are configured so that the devices associated with the respective cable connectors involved in making the connections can be read via the tray.

2. The subrack of claim 1, wherein the devices associated each connector comprises Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) tags, wherein the backplate and the tray are config-

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ured so that the RFID tags associated with the connectors involved in making the connections can be read via the tray.

3. The subrack of claim 2, wherein each tray comprises a plurality of RFID antennas, each of the RFID antennas being associated with a respective one of the positions, wherein each of the plurality of RFID antennas can be selectively coupled to an RFID reader in order to read the RFID tags associated with the connectors involved in making the connections.

4. The subrack of claim 1, wherein the devices associated each connector comprises connection point identifier (CPID) storage devices, wherein the backplate and the tray are configured so that the CPID storage devices associated with the connectors involved in making the connections can be read via the tray.

5. The subrack of claim 1, wherein the backplate is implemented as a backplane printed circuit board.

6. The subrack of claim 5, wherein the backplane printed circuit board comprises a tray connector, wherein the tray has attached thereto a backplane connector that is configured to be connected to the tray connector of the backplane printed circuit board in connection with the tray being attached to the backplate; and

wherein the tray further comprises at least one plastic tether attached to the backplane connector, wherein the plastic tether is configured to pull the backplane connector out of the tray connector on the backplane printed circuit board in connection with the tray being removed from the backplate.

7. The subrack of claim 5, wherein the backplane printed circuit board comprises at least one cut out to which a strain relief cable can be attached.

8. The subrack of claim 1, comprising a plurality of trays.

9. The subrack of claim 1, wherein each tray comprises a plurality of visual indicators, each of the visual indicators being associated with a respective one of the positions.

10. The subrack of claim 1, wherein each tray is configured so that a plurality of fiber optic adapters can be attached to the printed circuit board, each of the plurality of fiber optic adapters associated with a respective one of the positions.

11. The subrack of claim 1, further comprising a subrack controller;

wherein each tray comprises:

a tray controller; and

at least two communication ports, each of which is coupled to the tray controller, wherein the subrack is configured so that the tray controller can be coupled to the subrack controller via one or more of the communication ports.

12. The subrack of claim 1, wherein each tray includes pockets formed in the tray to accommodate electronics.

13. The subrack of claim 1, wherein the backplate comprises a tray connector, wherein the tray has attached thereto a backplate connector that is configured to be connected to the tray connector of the backplate in connection with the tray being attached to the backplate; and

wherein the tray is configured to disconnect the backplate connector from the tray connector on the backplate in connection with the tray being removed from the backplate.

14. A method of using a subrack that comprises a backplate and at least one tray configured so that a plurality of connections can be made at a plurality of positions on the tray, each

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of the plurality of connections involving a respective at least two cables, wherein at least one of the cables involved with each of the connections is terminated with at least one connector having information stored in a device associated therewith, the method comprising:

attaching the tray to the backplate;

reading, via the tray, the devices associated with the at least one connector involved in making the connections; and removing the tray from the backplate and thereafter re-attaching the tray to the backplate.

15. The method of claim 14, wherein the devices associated each connector comprises radio frequency identification (RFID) tags; and

wherein reading, via the tray, the devices associated with the connectors involved in making the connections comprises reading, via the tray, the RFID tags associated with the connectors involved in making the connections.

16. The method of claim 15, wherein each tray comprises a plurality of RFID antennas, each of the RFID antennas being associated with a respective one of the positions; and

wherein reading the RFID tags associated with the connectors involved in making the connections via the tray comprises selectively coupling each of the plurality of RFID antennas to an RFID reader in order to read the RFID tags associated with the connectors involved in making the connections.

17. The method of claim 14, wherein the devices associated each connector comprises connection point identifier (CPID) storage devices; and

wherein reading, via the tray, the devices associated with the connectors involved in making the connections comprises reading the CPID storage devices associated with the connectors involved in making the connections via the tray.

18. The method of claim 14, wherein the backplate is implemented as a backplane printed circuit board.

19. The method of claim 18, wherein the backplane printed circuit board comprises a tray connector, wherein the tray has attached thereto a backplane connector that is configured to be connected to the tray connector of the backplane printed circuit board in connection with the tray being attached to the backplate; and

wherein the tray further comprises at least one plastic tether attached to the backplane connector, wherein the plastic tether is configured to pull the backplane connector out of the tray connector on the backplane printed circuit board in connection with the tray being removed from the backplate.

20. The method of claim 18, further comprising attaching a strain relief cable to the tray using a cut out formed in the backplane printed circuit board.

21. The method of claim 14, wherein the backplate comprises a tray connector, wherein the tray has attached thereto a backplate connector that is configured to be connected to the tray connector of the backplate in connection with the tray being attached to the backplate; and

wherein the tray is configured to disconnect the backplate connector from the tray connector on the backplate in connection with the tray being removed from the backplate.

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